



Texas State Soil & Water Conservation Board

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Monthly Program News and Activities

July, 2007

The TSSWCB produces this monthly update of the agency's activities as an informational service to local soil and water conservation district directors. I hope you find this information helpful, and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to call your local Field Representative or our State Headquarters.

REX ISOM, Executive Director

Budget/Accounting

- Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget for the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board – On July 19th the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board approved an Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2008 at \$16,560,996. Each District's approved allocation amount for FY 2008 Technical Assistance, Matching Funds, and Director Mileage & Per Diem will be distributed in August.
- Fiscal Year 2007 Financial Statement and Audit Requirements – The FY 2007 District Financial Statement/Audit requirements and Notification Forms will be distributed in August. The deadline for submission of the Notification Form will be September 30th.
- **Reminder: August 31st is the deadline for FY 2007 Technical Assistance Performance Reports and 4th Qtr Supplemental Matching Fund Claims.**

Dates and Deadlines

- August 31 – Deadline for Matching Fund supplemental to be claimed
- August 31 – Deadline for Technical Assistance program Performance Report
- August 31 – 4th quarter ending

Human Resources

TSSWCB is currently recruiting for 2 Natural Resource Specialist III positions in Temple. Both positions have a start date not earlier than September 1, 2007. We are also recruiting for 4 Natural Resource Specialist IV positions. The locations are Centerville, Gonzales, Center and Nacogdoches. All positions have a start date not earlier than September 1, 2007.

New Hires

Carl Steffey started work on June 1, 2007 as the Program Supervisor III (Regional Manager) in Mount Pleasant. Gary Bearden started work on June 1, 2007 as the Engineering Technician V in Dublin.

Pam Casebolt started work on June 11, 2007 as a Natural Resource Specialist III (Project Manager) with our Nonpoint Source team in Temple.

Resignations

Carter Miska, Program Supervisor III (Regional Manager) in Wharton resigned on July 6, 2007.

Joshua Burditt resigned July 20, 2007 as an Engineering Tech V in Wharton.

Promotion

Lawrence Brown was promoted to the Program Supervisor III (Regional Manager) in Wharton on July 9, 2007.

Special Projects

State Meeting

The Annual State Meeting for 2007 is scheduled for October 22 – 24, 2007 in Waco. Please mark this date and make plans to attend. Everyone's support is needed and welcomed.

New Rule Adopted

The State Board has adopted a new rule to address handling public funds. The new rule states that in order for a soil and water conservation district to be designated to administer State Board programs or to receive funds or cost share funds, they must show that they are conducting regularly scheduled meetings to properly handle financial and contractual obligations and are implementing internal controls for handling public funds.

The rule was published in the June 15 edition of the *Texas Register* and was adopted by the State Board in their July 19, 2007 meeting.

Upcoming Association Meetings

August 15- South Plains Association Meeting-Lubbock

August 23- Panhandle Association Meeting-Memphis

Public Information/ Education

2007 Annual Agriculture and Forestry Appreciation Banquet

The 23rd Annual Agriculture and Forestry Appreciation Banquet was held June 28, 2007, at the Texas Country Music Hall of Fame in Carthage, Texas. The banquet emphasized the importance of the income from agriculture and forestry products in Panola County and recognized agricultural leaders for their contributions to the industry. The 2006 annual income in Panola County from agriculture and forestry totaled more than \$79,000.

Panola County recognized the following individuals at the awards banquet. Outstanding Conservation Rancher, Charles Gillis; Woodland Conservationist, Joe Beard; Community Service to Agriculture, Paul Leggett; USDA Producer of the Year, James Tiller

A new award category was added for 2007, the Outstanding Woman of Agriculture. This award is to honor and recognize the contribution made by women to the agricultural way of life. This award was presented to Jo Dena Sealey.

The Panola County Ag Committee Scholarship recipients were also introduced: Kelsey Norris, Samantha Komes, Ashley Whitsett, Darcy Parker, and Andy Powell. Following the awards presentations, Amber Hale, ambassador with the Texas Beef Council, spoke on the beef industry. More than 160 people attended the noon meeting.

The Panola Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Texas Cooperative Extension, Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Texas Forest Service (TFS) hosted the event, along with several businesses and individuals. This year's financial contributors included First State Bank, Farmers State Bank, Panola National Bank, Heritage Land Bank, Louisianan-Pacific Corporation, Kim R. Smith Logging Inc., Texas Utilities, Tyson Foods, Car-Tex Trailer, Pilgrim's Pride, Hooper Feed and Farm Supply Inc., Panola County Ag Committee, Panola County Cattleman's Association, Chamber of Commerce, Bar Three Brangus, Panola Landowner's Association, Double "D" Auction, Rusk County Electric, Anderson Fertilizer, Panola Livestock, Lowe's Tractor, Fish & Still Henderson, Clay VanDeCarr Construction, and Mason's Place.

By Patricia Griffin, Panola SWCD, and Kathy Dean, NRCS PAS

14th Annual Clover Forage Field Day

The 14th Annual Clover Forage Field Day was held April 25, 2007, at the Iola Community Center and was sponsored by the Bédias Creek Soil and Water Conservation District at Iola, Texas. Approximately 145 landowners attended the clover management information field day.

Information on high intensity/short duration grass and clover grazing was provided. Floyd Nauls, Jr., district conservationist for the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service provided job sheets for numerous clovers that grow in the area. The group also toured a farm to see a clover management project up-close.

The project belongs to landowner Gene Sollock, who seldom fertilizes and has not fed hay or grain for more than 14 years with a large number of livestock emerging well finished.

This year's Clover Field Day was sponsored by the Grazing Land Conservation Initiative; Fairlie Seed Company; Pennington Seed, Inc; Producers Coop/Bryan; Holistic Resources Mgt. of Texas; Navasota Livestock Auction; First State Bank of Bédias; and Standley Feed and Seed.

By Kathy Dean

Gohmert to Lead Natural Resources Conservation Service in Texas

Temple, Texas – Don Gohmert recently assumed the position of state conservationist for USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Texas.

In that capacity, Gohmert will be responsible for NRCS operations within the state, including the administration of conservation planning assistance to private landowners, conservation cost-share programs, Resource Conservation and Development, the watershed flood prevention program, Natural Resources Inventory, and soil survey mapping.

"I am excited to be returning to Texas," Gohmert said. "Texas is a state with a great diversity in natural resources, conservation issues, tremendous opportunities, and great people."

Gohmert is replacing Dr. Larry Butler, who retired as the NRCS state conservationist for Texas in March. Gohmert is moving from Louisiana, where he has served as the state conservationist for 15 years. He has also worked for the agency in both Texas and Arizona.

Born and raised in Cuero, Texas, Gohmert received his bachelor's degree in agriculture from Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas. He also earned his master's degree in public administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University.

Exhibits/Events/Video Library

Video Library

- I. Four videos have been checked out since July 1, 2007.

Exhibit

- I. Exhibit was presented by Bosque SWCD #555 at the Central Texas Fair on July 13, 2007.
- II. Exhibit was presented by Mel Davis at the Texas Sheep and Goat Raiser's Association event in Kerrville, Texas on July 19-21, 2007.

Future Events

The Exhibit will be displayed by Kendria Ray at the Colorado County Fair in August.

Conservation Programs

Clean Water Act, §319(h) Grant Program

FY2001 – FY2006 CWA §319(h) GRANT STATUS:

There are currently 77 ongoing §319(h) grant-funded projects addressing a wide array of agricultural and silvicultural NPS issues. Federal funds totaling \$15 million are primarily being used to address NPS pollution from animal feeding operations, prevent atrazine runoff, provide technical assistance, implement best management practices, support various NPS outreach/education programs, develop and implement Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs), and implement the nonpoint source portion of TMDL Implementation Plans.

Fiscal Year 2007 CWA §319(h) GRANT APPLICATION:

The TSSWCB's Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 §319(h) program allocation is \$4,687,523. The TSSWCB received 22 proposals requesting a total of \$7,936,663 in federal funds. Of the 22 proposals, 11 were selected for funding. TSSWCB staff has finalized the FY2007 §319(h) grant application and it was submitted to EPA on June 21, 2007. TSSWCB staff is currently awaiting comments from EPA. All projects are contingent upon final approval from EPA.

EPA REGION 6 / STATE NPS PROGRAM MANAGERS WORKSHOP:

On June 6 and 7, John Foster, Aaron Wendt, and TJ Helton participated in the EPA Region 6 / State NPS Program Managers Workshop in Dallas. This meeting provided TSSWCB staff the opportunity to discuss the various approaches and strategies that are used to implement the nonpoint source management program with staff from EPA Region 6, TCEQ, and other states including Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and Oklahoma. In particular, attendees discussed the successes and challenges in writing and implementing watershed protection plans, increasing stakeholder involvement, targeted water quality assessment, BMP effectiveness monitoring, and nonpoint source pollutant reduction to achieve water quality standards.

FY2007 NONPOINT SOURCE ANNUAL REPORT:

In order to receive §319(h) funds, the State of Texas must submit a report on the activities of the Texas NPS Program annually. TSSWCB staff and TCEQ staff are in the initial stages of report development. Staff from both agencies met on June 13 to begin discussing the structure and content of the report, as well as a timeline for completion. The report will highlight the State's efforts during 2007 to collect data, assess water quality, implement projects that reduce or prevent nonpoint source pollution, and educate and involve the public to improve and maintain the quality of water resources for current and future generations of Texans. This report must be submitted to EPA in January 2008 to ensure continued funding.

Water Quality Management Plan Program

At their meeting on July 19, 2007, the State Board took action and approved S.B. 503 cost-share allocations for FY-08. The grand total for both cost-share and administration was \$2,048,422.00. This funding will be activated on Sept. 1, 2007 and districts will have 8 months to obligate the funds to water quality management plans. In other action, the State Board designated, with cost-share funding, the McCulloch, San Saba and Pecan Bayou soil and water conservation districts as priority districts. Brady Creek and Pecan Bayou are the impaired water bodies in these districts.

Districts are making every effort to ensure that FY-05 cost-share funds are used to the fullest extent. Deadline for FY-05 cost-share payments will be the August 10, 2007.

Poultry Water Quality Management Plans

Two bills were passed and signed into law during the 80th Legislative Session.

HB 1457: Removes cooking of poultry mortality for swine food as a method of poultry carcass disposal to be consistent with Section 165.026 of the Texas Agriculture Code, which prohibits feeding of restricted garbage (ie: poultry carcasses) to swine. It also prohibits storage of poultry carcasses on the site of a poultry facility for more than 72 hours unless the carcasses are refrigerated or frozen.

HB 1719: Removes the requirement to notify the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) of burial of animal carcasses if that burial is on land covered by a Water Quality Management Plan certified by TSSWCB that addresses site specific animal mortality burial. Poultry carcasses may only be buried in the event of a major die-off that exceeds 0.3% per day of the total farm inventory and the normal method of disposal must continue to be used.

TCEQ adopted a change to the CAFO rules on September 20, 2006 which removes the requirement for dry litter poultry operations to seek coverage under the CAFO general permit. The rule change also addressed SB1707 regarding exemption of dry-litter poultry facilities with WQMPs from the requirement to obtain an individual permit if in close proximity to sole-source drinking water supplies.

However, although dry litter poultry operations are no longer required to apply for or obtain permit coverage, large farms are still defined as CAFOs, and as such are still required to follow certain requirements of the rules or else be subject to having to obtain permit coverage. To maintain their permit exemption, they must obtain and follow a Water Quality Management Plan certified by TSSWCB in accordance with the schedule provided in SB 1339 and in 31 TAC §523.3 (h). They also must not have discharges of pollutants to waters of the state or U.S.

A new guidance document is available and now posted on the agency website to address additional requirements necessary for CAFO size poultry farms to remain in compliance with state and federal rules and laws.

Current status of poultry WQMPs:

Total existing farms	1375
Farms that currently operate under a certified WQMP	1319 (96%)
Farms not signed-up that were due in 2002, 2003, or 2005	1
Farms that have until January 2008 to obtain a WQMP	15
Farms that requested a WQMP and have plans in various stages of development	37
New farms expected to be built in next 18 months in Waco area with Sanderson Farms.	75

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program and Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) Program

Upcoming Activities

Texas is hosting the **15th National NPS Monitoring Workshop** in August 2007 in Austin. The theme for this EPA-sponsored workshop is *Monitoring for Decision Making*. More information, including a call for papers and posters, is available at the Conference website <http://www.rivers.txstate.edu/NPS07/>.

The TSSWCB and the TCEQ established the joint technical Task Force on Bacteria TMDLs in September 2006 and gave the Task Force members 120 days to report. The 3rd draft of the Report was delivered to the Board and Commission via e-mail on January 25, precisely 120 days. The Task Force, and approximately 50 Expert Advisors, held three meetings/teleconferences to develop the Report. All Task Force materials and documents are available at <http://twri.tamu.edu/bacteriatmdl/>. The Recommended Approach for Bacteria TMDL and I-Plan Development section is the heart of the Report. The May 2007 issue of *The Cattleman*, published by Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, included an article on the Bacteria TMDL Task Force. The Board and Commission have tentatively scheduled June 29 as a joint work session for action on the Task Force Report.

North Bosque River Restoration Initiative

Dairy Manure Export Support Project

Funding for the Dairy Manure Export Support Program has been depleted to the point such that the last day to receive reimbursement for hauling was February 28, 2007. Program participants were notified of the deadline at the beginning of February. Final billing for the haulers was due to the DMES Office by March 15, 2007. The final report discussing the program's accomplishments since its inception in October, 2000 should be completed by June.

As of February 28, over 1,093,000 tons of manure have been removed from North Bosque and Leon watershed dairies and transported to commercial composting operations.

Coastal Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program

The CCC met in Galveston, Thursday, June 21 at 1:30 p.m. There were no action items on the agenda.

CIAP Program

On April 16, 2007, MMS released the individual CIAP allocation amounts for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. The State of Texas will receive \$48,591,202.09 for fiscal year 2007 and for fiscal year 2008. Of that amount, \$31,584,281.36 will be allocated to the state and \$17,006,920.73 will be allocated directly to the 18 coastal counties. The MMS originally estimated that Texas would receive between \$55 and \$70 million based on revenues generated in the federal 2005 fiscal year. Due to the severe storm events in the Gulf of Mexico during the 2006 fiscal year, particularly Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the outer Continental Shelf revenues generated off the Texas coast were significantly lower in 2006 than expected.

Before any funds can be disbursed to the state or the counties, a state CIAP plan must be approved by MMS. This plan will include the recommended projects that have been submitted for funding. The CIAP staff is currently preparing the draft plan to be presented for discussion and approval at a Coastal Land Advisory Board (CLAB) meeting to be held in the near future. The CLAB-approved draft plan will be submitted to the Office of Governor for final approval before being posted in the Texas Register for 30 days. After public comments are reviewed, the state plan will be presented at a second CLAB meeting. Upon approval by the CLAB and the Office of the Governor, the plan will be submitted to MMS, who has 90 days to review and approve/disapprove the plan. After the state plan is approved by MMS, grant applications for each selected project will be submitted to MMS for funding approval. The MMS will not begin reviewing grant applications until October 2007.

CMP Grant Program

Information on Grant Cycle 13 (FY 09) is now available online.

<http://www.glo.state.tx.us/coastal/grants/cycle13.html>

The deadline for pre-proposals is June 20, 2007 by 5:00 p.m. (Submission of the pre-proposal is optional and is only necessary if written comments are desired.) The full application is due October 10, 2007 by 5:00 p.m.

Flood Control Dams

The National Watershed Coalition will conduct a workshop "Operation and Maintenance/Sponsor Responsibility 101" workshop in Decatur, September 24 – 26, 2007. The workshop will be conducted in cooperation with Wise County, Wise County WCID #1, Texas Association of Watershed Sponsors, the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board, and the USDA-NRCS. The workshop costs \$160. Space is limited so interested attendees should register early.

Further information on the workshop may be found at

<http://www.watershedcoalition.org/events.html>

BRUSH CONTROL PROGRAM STATUS REPORT

BACKGROUND:

The 79th Legislature continued funding for the State Brush Control Program by providing \$1,874,176.00 in General Revenue Funds in FY07. These funds were directed to be used for continuation of brush control projects designated by the Soil and Water Conservation Board.

Watershed	2007 Allocated Funds	Unobligated Funds (\$)	Treated Acres
<i>North Concho</i>	50,000.00	20.00	328,802.14
<i>Pedernales</i>	200,000.00	\$ 18,222.55	73,375.08
<i>Twin Buttes</i>	500,000.00	\$ 0.20	275,765.57
<i>Lake Ballinger</i>	50,000.00	\$ 0.00	8314.7
<i>Oak Creek Lake</i>	50,000.00	\$0.00	16,404
<i>Pecos (SaltCedar)</i>	150,000.00	\$ 18,914.46	7,274.15
<i>Upper Colorado(SaltCedar)</i>	Combined w/Pecos	Combined w/Pecos	824.32
<i>Hubbard Creek(SaltCedar)</i>	60,000.00	\$ 0.00	0
<i>Lake Arrowhead</i>	100,000.00	100,000.00	0
<i>Nueces River</i>	100,000.00	0.00	0

*The table listed above represents General Revenue 07 money in the unobligated funds column

*Total acres treated represents treated acres since the beginning of each project

- Provided the following SWCD with Brush Program Updates or Brush Program Assistance

Area 1 Districts

Dawson County SWCD
Upper Colorado SWCD

Area 2 Districts

North Concho River SWCD
Middle Concho SWCD
Tom Green County SWCD
Mitchell County SWCD
Runnels SWCD
Middle Clear Fork SWCD
Trans Pecos SWCD
Howard County SWCD

Nolan County SWCD
Eldorado-Divide SWCD
Pedernales SWCD
Gillispie County SWCD
Pecos County SWCD
Midland SWCD
Sandhills SWCD

Area 3

McMullen County SWCD
Caldwell/ Travis SWCD

Area 5

Archer County SWCD

Lower Clear Fork/Brazos SWCD

More Information on Programs

For more information on any of these programs, refer to our semiannual report on the web:

<http://www.tsswcb.state.tx.us/reports.html>